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1. (Amended) A lithographic projection apparatus, comprising:

a radiation system [for supplying] constructed and arranged to supply a projection beam of radiation;

a mask table provided with a mask holder for holding a mask;

a substrate table provided with a substrate holder for holding a substrate;

a projection system constructed and arranged to image [for imaging] an irradiated portion of the mask onto a target portion of the substrate;[and]

a preparatory station comprising an intermediate table on which a substrate can be positioned before transfer to the substrate table[;],

[characterized in that] the intermediate table [comprises] comprising a major surface provided with a plurality of apertures[,]; and

a gas bearing generator constructed and arranged to generate [means for generating] a gas bearing between said major surface and a substrate located thereon.

2. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein said preparatory station comprises [gas ionizing means for ionizing] a gas ionizer constructed and arranged to ionize said gas.

3. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1 [or 2, characterized in that] wherein said intermediate table comprises a first [control means for regulating] temperature controller constructed and arranged to regulate a [the] temperature of [that] the intermediate

table.

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4. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, [2 or 3, characterized in that] wherein said gas bearing has thickness less than 150 μm .

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5. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1[-4, characterized in that] wherein said preparatory station comprises a second [control means for regulating] temperature controller constructed and arranged to regulate a [the] temperature of said gas.

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6. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 3 [or 5, characterized in that said first and/or said second control means maintain] wherein said first temperature controller maintains the intermediate table and the gas at a temperature substantially equal to [the] a temperature of the substrate table.

7. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1[-6, characterized in that] wherein said apparatus further comprises:

a position detector constructed and arranged to detect [detecting means for detecting] a first position of said substrate on said intermediate table;

a displacement calculator [calculating means] for calculating a required displacement between said first position and a desired position of the substrate on the intermediate table; and

an actuator constructed and arranged to move [moving means for moving] said

substrate from said first position to said desired position.

8. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7, [characterized in that] wherein said [detecting means are] position detector is constructed and arranged to detect an edge of the substrate.

9. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7 [or 8, characterized in that] wherein said [detecting means are] position detector is constructed and arranged to detect a mark on the substrate.

10. (Amended) A device manufacturing method comprising [the steps of]:
(a) providing a mask table with a mask which contains a pattern,
(b) providing a substrate table with a substrate which is at least partially covered by a layer of radiation-sensitive material, [and]
(c) subsequent to (b), providing the substrate to an intermediate table comprising a major surface provided with a plurality of apertures, and maintaining the substrate for a given time interval upon a gas bearing generated between the major surface and the substrate; and
[c] (d) using a projection beam of radiation to project an irradiated part of the mask onto a target area of the layer of radiation-sensitive material. [; characterized in that prior to step (b) the following steps are carried out:

providing the substrate to an intermediate table comprising a major surface provided with a plurality of apertures, and maintaining the substrate for a given time interval upon a

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cont. gas bearing generated between the said major surface and the substrate.]

12. (Amended) A substrate preparing device comprising an intermediate table on which a substrate can be positioned before transfer to a substrate table in a lithographic projection apparatus;

[characterized in that] the intermediate table [comprises] comprising a major surface provided with a plurality of apertures, and a gas bearing [means for generating] generator constructed and arranged to generate a gas bearing between said major surface and a substrate located thereon.

Please add the following new claims:

--13. A substrate preparing device according to claim 12, wherein said gas bearing generator comprises:

a gas source arranged to deliver gas through the apertures to generate the gas bearing,
and
an evacuation pump arranged to evacuate the gas from the gas bearing.

14. An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said gas bearing generator comprises:

a gas source arranged to deliver gas through the apertures to generate the gas bearing,
and
an evacuation pump arranged to evacuate the gas from the gas bearing.--